

**QUESTIONNAIRE
RESULTS!**



**"MADAM: WHAT DO YOU
THINK OF BOHEMIAN
RHAPSODY?"**

"BLÆHHH!"

* * * * *

THIS IS AN APOLOGY FOR THE INTOLERABLE DELAY IN THE PRODUCTION OF THIS ISSUE OF BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY. THIS DELAY WAS CAUSED BY THREE THINGS; MY MOVE FROM BELGIUM TO NORWAY AND TWO DIFFERENT AND DISTINCT COMPUTER FAILURES. THIS HAS RESULTED IN THIS ISSUE BEING PRODUCED ONE WHOLE MONTH LATER THAN SCHEDULED. PROVIDING THAT NOTHING ELSE GOES WRONG THEN THIS ISSUE WILL BE DISTRIBUTED BEFORE THE END OF APRIL 1986, AND THE FOLLOWING ISSUE SHOULD BE CLOSE BEHIND. ALL OF THE BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY GAMES HAVE BEEN GOING AHEAD AS NORMAL BY FLYER TO ALL OF THE PLAYERS WHICH MEANS THAT EVEN THOUGH THIS PRODUCTION HAS BEEN DELAYED THE GAMES STILL GO ON REGARDLESS, COME RAIN OR DATA CORRUPTIONS.

* * * * *

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

MALCOLM SMITH
GRANLIVEIEN 11
1086 OSLO 10
NORWAY

Waiting Lists

Diplomacy	Game 86N2	7 Wanted (No game fee)
-----------	-----------	------------------------

Games In Progress

Aquire	Game 1	GM: Martin Le Fevre
Diplomacy	Game 86N1	GM: Male Smith
Dragon Pass	Game 1	GM: Male Smith
Railway Rivals	Game 374X	GM: Rip Gooch

Cost

This issue costs 50p, one dollar or 10 Nkr, or the equivalent. I pay well (i.e. tons of free issues) for contributions whether they be articles, variants, short stories or anything upon any subject under the sun.

Deadline

Since all **Bohemian Rhapsody** games are run to independant deadlines to ensure the required efficiency for the games players there will be no actual fixed deadline for the magazine. All game reports (which will be out the following day to the players) will have priority over the production of the magazine. This means that the games players will get a better service with **Bohemian Rhapsody**. Try it and see. Any contributions, letters, etc., will be published in the next appropriate issue of **Bohemian Rhapsody**.

For those with an eye for the finer details:

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY IS PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED BY:
MARTIN LE FEVRE, 1 WELLESBY NAUTICAL SCHOOL, BLYTH, NORTHUMBERLAND.

A PASSAGE TO NORWAY

Norway! Land of difficult spelling.
Hiding your beauty behind strange vowels.
Land of long nights, short days and dots over 'O's.
Ruminating majestic reindeers
Tread warily on ice floes
Ever aware of what happened to the
'Titanic'.
One day I will sojourn to your shores
I live in the middle of England
But!
Norway! My soul resides in your watery ~~fiords~~ ~~fyords~~ ~~fieords~~
Inlets.

- The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole

Welcome to the third attempt at the third issue of the third volume of that unlucky magazine, **Bohemian Rhapsody**. The more issues that I try to produce, the more I come to the conclusion that the likes of Richard Walkerdine and co. have laid a curse upon me. The jinx that I seem to have collected started a year ago in Belgium when the photographic shop printed the wrong pictures for me which resulted in the delay of one of the issues by a few weeks. Then the manuscript was filed away on a slow boat to China by the Belgian Postal Services. I later decided to produce another issue warning the readers of the delay when that was lost in the post too.

I then bought a disk drive and an external 512K RAM to make production of **Bohemian Rhapsody** easier mainly because the microdrives were liable to pack up at some vital point (like during a backup session) and lose all the data. For one issue things were looking up, I had managed to get one slim issue out on time without any major problems.

However, as soon as the manuscript was sent over to Martin my RAM card started to play up so I returned the card to Medic Datasystems for replacement. About a month or five later the card was returned and then I was stunned to find that my disks weren't compatible with each other (how they worked for those few days earlier beats me) as they were of different manufacture, so I had to send those back to the UK for replacement. This meant that all the while I was dependant on my microdrives again and I didn't have any access to my files which were on disk at all.

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

After repeated phoning to Medic demanding that they send me my disks back to me and just receiving promises after promises that they were in the post, or going out that day, or that they had left yesterday, I was starting to get worried about whether I'd ever see them again.

In the meantime I was having trouble with my microdrives. I've lost count of the amount of text that I've lost with corrupted microdrives or power surges at the critical moments. I reckon that someone is somewhere watching me, waiting for me to be in a vulnerable position and then sending a 100,000 volt pulse down the mains lead. The last issue of **Bohemian Rhapsody** was delayed by similar means four times! Even so, I'm rather proud of what I have managed to produce under the circumstances.

Back at Medic; I rang up one November morning last year and for once the 'phone wasn't answered. I discovered later that day (I've forgotten how) that the Managing Director had done a bunk and the staff hadn't been paid for weeks so they simply shut up shop and walked away leaving my disk drives behind. I then contacted the magazine through which I 'bought' my goods and asked for details of the Advertising Protection Scheme and I was told that I couldn't get anything until the company was wound up in the High Courts.

Since then the Fraud Squad have been involved and I have been in touch with them to discover that the Swedish MD had left over 230 users like myself in the lurch to the tune of over seventy three thousand pounds and was last seen in Eire keeping well away from the British police who were maintaining an interest in him.

The magazine whom I may be able to claim against has just folded and I wonder if the liability remains with the publishers or the title, so I don't know what will happen there.

However, I've bought myself another pair of disk drives and 512K RAM from what appear to be reliable distributors. After having the drives despatched to North Wales a few months before I left Belgium (I wanted to make sure that I had them in my hands when I landed in Oslo) I was foolish enough to believe that all my problems (apart from Medic) were all over.

Ha! The useless lot at Cumana (the drives people) had sent me the wrong bloody drives. Instead of the 3.5" drives that I wanted they sent me two 5.25" drives instead. And there was no time for me to change them before I went to Norway having only discovered this a few days before my ferry left England. So that meant that I had to buy a pile of 5.25" drives to put all my QL work on. What of the 20-odd disks that I had for the 3.5" drive? Well, they've gone to my mate in Belgium who in the course of the next few weeks transfer the data from disks onto microdrive for me. However, his QL kit is in the UK at the moment...

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

So, until last week I had a working system with a pair of drives and a pile of memory. I started to produce **Bohemian Rhapsody** and when at one delicate moment, when I was saving the document to disk, when the mains decided to surge and erasing the file from my memory and zapping my diskette which meant that I was left with precisely nothing to show for a few day's work. 9,000 words gone, just like that.

In addition, I was having a few problems with this RAM board. I think that I was in possession of a 'slow' RAM whose read/write cycle was slightly out of its correct phase which meant that I was getting corrupted memory. Things were getting too much, and after writing much of **Bohemian Rhapsody** it was starting to effect both me and the magazine. I then decided to try and salvage the wreckage and copy the manuscript from disk, through the RAM card (unfortunately, there's no other way) and then onto microdrive and then carry on from there.

I performed that little operation and then packed that RAM card off to the manufacturers last week and I'm still awaiting my replacement which is supposed to be of a more reliable stock. Looking at the saved manuscript earlier this evening I was horrified to find that most of it was in the great Write Only Memory In The Sky and what was remaining was almost unreadable. I contemplated submitting it anyway, but after careful consideration I decided not to. However, I am printing four pages of the rubbish in the middle of the magazine so that you can see what you nearly got. The third paragraph just tears me up. Hopefully, it will be printed in a different colour so that you can distinguish it from the rest of the magazine.

If you want to translate the garbage then it's pretty easy; if you're in doubt about any of the words then change some of the letters by other letters that occur in the alphabet some four characters earlier and you ought to get the gist of the text. Computer phreaks ought to be able to work out what is exactly wrong with the RAM card with such a printout.

So where does that leave me now? Well, I'm back to the status when I bought the QL eighteen months ago with two microdrives and unexpanded memory. Medic have just been wound up and I'm waiting to see what happens there and I'm waiting for my RAM card to return from Miracle Systems and I'm also waiting for my software to be downloaded from disk to microdrive by my good friend Tony. Until then, I'm having to juggle the production of **Bohemian Rhapsody** on the microdrive cartridges. However, let me get one thing absolutely clear; the Sinclair (now Amstrad) QL is a fine machine and it hasn't let me down, only the manufacturers of the peripherals have. In a month or so I expect to have an all singing and dancing system and the quality of **Bohemian Rhapsody**, not to mention the frequency ought to improve a great deal.

But perhaps I'm tempting fate with such a statement. We'll see.

A PASSAGE FROM BELGIUM

The last time I wrote the introductory sentence to this section I wrote "After four weeks of leaving Antwerp..", the time before that I wrote "three weeks" and now, I'll have to kick off this piece with the following introduction, and I hope to God that I won't have to change it again.

After five weeks of leaving Antwerp for the last time, I'm able to sit down well after what the Norwegians call "Long Friday" - their name for the Easter week in which all of Norway closes up shop and packs its bags and rushes to the hills for the first tans of the year and for the last skiing before the skis are packed away for the summer.

I've had my first attempt at cross country skiing during the Easter week and I've only just recovered from laughing too much at my miserable attempts to ski across a couple of miles of forest tracks. The cross-country ski is much different from the normal Alpine skis that most of the UK skiers are accustomed to. Instead of being those short stobby affairs, the cross-country skis are considerable thinner and a deal longer. The skis I've got are about 2" wide which seems to be about the correct width for a beginner (read incompetent), and there seems to be two other widths, one thinner for the experts that ski along the tracks like nylon-clad dervishes at about 30 m.p.h. and wider skis for those who wish to ski in the mountains on looser snow and out of the ski tracks.

Perhaps I ought to explain what these tracks are. As you may well appreciate, Norway is quite accurately portrayed as a cold country with bags of snow all over the place making it a mecca for Xmas card photographers. Indeed, this rare breed of Homo Sapiens appears to be the only one thriving in this climate. But before I go too far astray I'll get back onto these track thingies. When the snow starts to fall (September time) the forest tracks soon get snowed up and the Oslo Commune (is this spelt right?), the GLC of Norway, get out their machines that drive up and down the forest trails making ski tracks for the cross-country skiers. In addition, when the lakes freeze over tracks are also made over these as well. So it's no surprise to see on a map a lake, in the middle of which, a half a dozen or so tracks all meet in some kind of skiing spaghetti-junction.

Right: An extract from 'The Times', Easter 1986.

Whooping it up on Long Friday

Sorry, Norway is closed. Banks, post offices, cinemas and concert halls, restaurants and food stores are shuttered, the city streets deserted. If you insist you can probably find a doctor, and even, somewhat incredibly, an occasional tram. Otherwise, the only game in town is the "SOS Line", whose telephone volunteers will try to talk you out of killing yourself. Or, of course, you could go to church.

The Norwegians look forward to their Easter holiday, which they claim is the longest in the world, with a mixture of excitement and dread. (It is no linguistic accident that their expression for Good Friday is "Long Friday").

Officially, the holiday begins today and ends next Wednesday; in practice, everybody who can get away with it drifts off during the previous weekend.

This is the second most sparsely-populated country, after Iceland, in Europe. Even on a normal day, even at the height of the rush-hour, even the capital city feels, to a Londoner, like a backdrop for *The Scream*. Munch's Expressionist masterpiece evoking a sense of loneliness and despair that is all many people know about Norway.

During Easter week, the cities present vistas of emptiness that might well have inspired Munch even at his least morose to hang up his easel and take to his bed.

The cold hand of Lutheranism can be blamed for much that may seem odd to us about Scandinavia but not, any longer, for this. In fact, Easter has developed, with post-war prosperity, with a dour religious observance to a holiday exodus, a national rite of spring.

It is estimated that 700,000 people, out of a population of four million, will be on the move during the ten days of Easter.

Most of them will scatter into the mountain fastnesses, to ski and to cultivate their first sunbats of the season on the dazzling snowfield, weather permitting.

Some will get into trouble in the wilderness, and rescue teams "on every other peak" according to one newspaper, stand poised to help them.

Some will die: lost and frozen to death, in falls and avalanches, or in road accidents. Some who survive will do so because they heeded the preliminary torrents of advice and made sure to ap- proach even the most innocuous outing in com- mando style — warm and waterproof clothing, of course; pockets filled with biscuits, chocolate, raisins, oats, nuts, dried fruit and salt; and empty plastic bottles to fill with snow and hold against the body for melting.

Perhaps the most curious aspect of Easter here is that so many people who have spent six months or more longing for an end to the snow and ice should now take flight from springtime in the cities in pursuit of the last knockings of winter.

The newspapers also close down for about a week, reappearing this year on April Fool's Day, which has a long and robust tradition here.

The classic pape, still a chortling matter some de- cades later, was perpetrated just after the war and was predicated inevitably on the unquenchable Scandinavian thirst for strong drink.

A series of official-looking announcements appeared, noting that the *Vinnepopol*, the government chain of off- licences that controls all alco- hol sales except beer, was giving the staff away because of a post-war shortage of glass for bottling. Helpful citizens were invited to bring their own containers. They queued in their tens of thousands — with milk churns.

It is just possible that this year's best April Fool has already come and gone. Nor- way, which took first place in the 1985 Eurovision Song Contest, has just chosen its entry for the 1986 competi- tion, to be held in Bergen.

The winning group, known inscrutably as The Garlic Girls, is a drag act.

Tony Samstag

Buying one's skis is an interesting experience. A set of skis ought to be proportional to one's height. This is measured by standing upright in the shop with an arm stretched up vertically with the hand parallel to the floor so that you look like Larry Grayson with a stiff arm. The kis ought to then fit in between the floor and your wrist. The skis say on the side that they're 210 cms long. That's the trouble with French Feet and Inches is that it's wildly inaccurate. I'm six foot and a bit tall, so that makes my arm about 10 inches long.

Which is the basis of one of my pet theories why all the foreign country with their daft version of feet and inches are always rioting and causing trouble (look at the Italians, a perfect example - but of what I'm not too sure). Hardly suprising really is it? Imagine the population of some backward country living for years with the good ol' Imperial measurement and the population being extremely content with having not only tea in the afternoons, croquet on the lawns but having arms that measured over two feet long. But then up comes this upstart Napoleon and then gives these people his version of feet and inches and what happens? Their arms get reduced by over 50%! No wonder they riot all the time, eat garlic and become offensive and finally, the final straw, they drive on the wrong side of the road!

And all because Boney was conscious of his height and passed laws that no-one should have arms longer than his. Which perhaps may be a convenient point to briefly mention why the USA is leading in the arms race, but then again, perhaps not.

Okay, so I hear you ask (do I?), why are the skis that long, i.e. just over six feet long? The only theory that I have upon the subject is that when one exectutes a perfect dive forwards (not recommended, by the way) then one can expect, to a 95% success rate, the point of the ski impaling itself in one's throat. I can't find a satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon, except that either the foreigners, as I've mentioned before, are a rum lot, else that I'm a rotten skier.

Anyway, the weather has improved a lot lately and even though the snow is still falling it's too wet to go skiing anymore, so I've put my skis away for the summer and I'll bring them out next winter, which ought to be here for thursday lunchtime. And then, fair readers, your roving reporter will have more skiing tales to tell. But until then, I'll be spending my non-Bohemian Rhapsody weekends walking and taking photographs of the local viking settlements.

In the past month or so, I've had a number of letters from my subscribers asking me if I'll be having a continuation of the popular series on Belgian sub-culture, namely "Belgie Bits". I don't think so. Norway is a sensible country run by sensible people (now, that's a fib, Smiff!) and I don't think that one can really take the mickey out this lot, nothing to do with the fact that if I do so then they may perform indecent acts of rape and pillage upon my delicate tender person, so I won't. Much.

But I will be offering articles upon the subject of Norwegian life in each article if I can if that may be of interest you all. Let me know.

One of the first rumours one always hears first about Scandinavia always seems to concern the price and availability of alcohol. Let me get one thing straight, the rumours are true. The price of alcohol here (if you can get it) is excessive to say the least. I'll try to sort out the licensing laws if I can here. One can purchase beer in supermarkets, but it only seems at certain times of the day. Beer is the only drink that one can get without too much bother. All wines and spirits have to be bought at the **Vinmonopolet**, the Government owned chain of off-licences that are open weekdays (9-5) and Saturday mornings. Note that it's impossible to nip out in the evening to the 'offie' to get a few cans or a bottle of plonk to drink in front of the box and watch 'Match of the Day' or something.

The bars are few and far between and sell, naturally, beer and sometimes wines. Spirits are unobtainable in bars, you can only get them in night clubs which cost anything upto six pounds just in entrance fees! Once in the bars and clubs the prices of the drinks are astronomical, two pounds fifty (the cheapest I've seen) to three pounds fifty for a pint of beer, and about four pounds for a Black Russian or something similar.

In the Vinmonopolet the spirits are about ten pounds a bottle and wines start at about three pounds fifty a bottle for Spanish mega-plonk to just under a fiver for a decent bottle for the dinner table.

All this has an interesting effect on the Norwegian social life. The only bars and clubs can be found in the town centres, and even so there aren't so many in Oslo. I've been told that in the centre of Oslo there are only about 50 bars. In the outskirts, or in the residential areas there are usually none, it's a surprise to find a bar (for some reason marked 'cafeteria') other than in the centre. Which means that there isn't such a thing as a 'local' as they exist in the UK, and if one fancies a quick beer out it's almost a military operation having to check one's finances and the train timetables. The latter because the Norwegians are sensibly strict about drink-driving. The limit here in Norway is sensible and should be introduced in the UK as the limit for a driver is 0% alcohol, any more and he, rightfully, loses his driving license.

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

Having a drink with friends usually involves a visit to someone's house and drinking a few beers there from the fridge as the beer bought in the supermarket is a damn sight cheaper than from over the counter. If a 'night out' is planned then the party starts off in someone's house until all the alcohol (usually a formidable quantity) has gone and then the celebrants toddle off towards the tram/metro to take them into town where only a few drinks will be bought.

Because of the high prices there isn't such thing as buying rounds of beer in Norway unless there are just two or three folk out for an evening. Apparently, the norm is for everyone to go 'Dutch' and just buy their own, which seemed a little strange to me at first, but after buying one or two rounds one doesn't find it too difficult to change one's ways. If you don't then you'll soon get a letter from your bank manager to tell you to do so!

On the ferry from Harwich to Oslo I got talking to a few Norwegians and I was suprised how many didn't like the Vinmonopolets at all. They couldn't see why they had to drink only what the Government let them. For example, if someone wants a bottle of a certain wine and it's not in the Vinmonopolet catalogue then tough they can't have it. The Norwegians who lived in the UK were fascinated by the traditional type of off-license who also doubled as a wine importer. But since I don't touch spirits at all, and I only have the odd bottle of vino together with dinner now and again it doesn't really worry me. However, the restrictions upon the wines have had an interesting effect upon me; when I do share a bottle for dinner I seem to enjoy it more and find it more 'interesting' to drink than when I was living in the middle of the EEC wine lake, Belgium.

I haven't mentioned the illicit alcohol which seems to be mentioned quite readily here. It appears that in the more remote regions of Norway (hang on, I thought it was all remote!) that the locals indulge in the production of moonshine produced from potatoes, suagar, yeast and, for some reason, peas. This results in rocket fuel which would be, if the officials could get their paws on it, exised at 90-95% proof. Although a few convictions are heard of now and again, I gather that the police often turn a 'blind eye' to the kitchen sink scale of production if it's for one's own consumption. However, I saw an article in a paper last year of a Norwegian in the north of Norway being done for having a still and all that, and his defence plea was that it was only for his own consumption. Fair enough, but fourty thousand gallons?

I think that's all I'll prattle on about the subject for this issue and I hope to have some more for you next time, possibly on the subject of Norwegian music and the Norwegian 'Song for Europe' entry from Per Rannug and I'm trying to get a series of articles upon Africa from May-Britt in the near future.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

There's currently an interesting discussion going on in the Hobby that may quite well get out of hand concerning two interrelated topics; the Zine Poll and the proposal by Richard Sharp of a confederation of British Diplomacy Magazine Editors. All this started some time ago when Richard Walkerdine, the editor of the Zine Poll winning **Mad Policy** handed over the running of the Poll to John Piggott.

When John Piggott received the custodianship of the Zine Poll he announced a few radical changes in the effect to that since the European magazines, the football magazines and the fantasy magazines didn't fit into his definition of the Hobby they wouldn't be eligible for the Zine Poll. This announcement was met with much applause from the Diplomacy based magazine editors such as Richard Walkerdine and Richard Sharp. However, not every editor was pleased:

"As you all know John Piggott is to run the Zine Poll this year and has suggested that it be limited to British Diplomacy Zines only... In **Orymoron** Jaap Jacobs laments the European involvement and makes the valid point that we should work to get more co-operation and understanding as fellow games enthusiasts... Should John Piggott with his narrow view of the Zine Poll I would undertake to run one more in keeping with those Richard (Walkerdine - ed) ran for the last few years with expanding rather than reducing horizons. It would also be simple and appropriate to give Class winners for Soccer magazines, European magazines and any other division felt relevant."

- Martin Le Fevre in **Zine With No Name** 2.

"It appears that this year it (the Zine Poll - ed) is to be run by John Piggott, one of the old school of Diplomacy purists, now almost extinct in the postal games hobby. He is restricting it to zines which run Diplomacy; and to British zines only.

"Ten years ago such an attitude was understandable. Now, it's almost incredible. Fortunately, Martin Le Fevre is going to organise a proper Zine Poll. Diplomacy founded the postal games hobby, but is played by, increasingly, only a minority of postal players. The Piggott poll won't get any voters, compared with the last couple."

- David Watts in **Rostherne Games Review** 78.

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

But the water is somewhat muddied by the confusion about which other magazines ought to be included in the Zine Poll, and I suppose into the definition of the British Diplomacy Hobby. The following have been written by John Piggott in **Mad Policy**, issues 115 and 116 respectively:

"...I must rule **Bohemian Rhapsody** is a European zine. It would be ridiculous if the eligibility requirements had to be followed by a list of exceptions. (I can take care of the Irish zines by calling it a British Poll, of course). If Malcolm can come up with a brief formula which admits his zine while excluding other European ones then I'll be prepared to reconsider."

"If someone can come up with a form of words that will admit **RGR**, **Hopscotch** and the other desirables while keeping out the soccer zines that aren't nothing to do with us, then I'll be glad to hear from him."

What's this has the Zine Poll gone sexist? Seriously I think that there's been a big error in communications somewhere. What John is trying to do, I think, is to define the limits of the Hobby as it stands now. The Postal Board Games Hobby, as I'd like to call it, would be answer to all the problems that are flying about. The FRP (Fantasy Role Playing) magazines and the Soccerleague magazines don't play board games, but magazines such as **Hopscotch**, **Diversions** and **Rosierne Games Review** all play games which either are, or could be, played upon a board. If 1829, Maneater, Railway Rivals and Diplomacy aren't board games then I don't know what are. As for the British bit of the eligibility rules then what's wrong with having the Poll open for magazines that are written 100% in English English (i.e. not American English). That way there would be no problems with editors feeling that the limits of the Hobby are being reduced significantly. I for one have never believed that a magazine ought to be European just because the editor happens to have his editorial address abroad. What about **Bohemian Rhapsody** Vol III, No II? That had a Welsh address on it for me. Was **BR** a Welsh zine then, I don't think so?

I believe that the Zine Poll problem could be sorted out by calling the Poll the British Postal Board Game Magazine Poll or something similar. I'm sending a copy of this magazine to John Piggott (via Richard Walkerdine, as I don't have John's address) and I'd be interested in hearing his comments upon my suggestion.

However, things have been complicated a little by Richard Sharp who wrote the following interesting piece:

"...his (Martin Le Fevre) involvement in the Hobby is about ten years junior to John Piggott for a start. As for other questions, like who invited to push himself forward, I couldn't tell you... The temptation is to say that if he doesn't like the British Diplomacy hobby and its institutions (such as they are) he should bugger off out of it...

"About these foreign zines, for a start. I see a number of these, and some of them are very good. They are, however, nothing to do with the British hobby. To include them in the poll as RJW (Richard Walkerdine - ed) did, was a mistake, because there is so little readership overlap between them and the British zines that significant comparisons are impossible. For example, **Voltigern**, the longest established and best of the European zines, published its mailing list in its recent 100th issue. Only 4 of the 90-odd names are members of the British hobby; in addition, a handful of German and Dutch players see a few British zines. Obviously, we aren't going to get a comparison that means anything.

"As for having 'classes' for this other rubbish - what the hell for? Who cares? Why not classes for company reports and telephone directories too? If we're trying to make the Zine Poll meaningless, let's do the job properly.

"God knows the British hobby is **too big** (my emphasis - ed) anyway - I for one regret that it is impossible to trade with all Diplomacy zines any more. I'm not even sure how many there are: Martin Le Fevre is talking about 200 (!) trades, though of course he's including the foreign zines and the garbage.

"I would like to see the formation of some kind of association of British Diplomacy zine editors, and if anyone has the energy and inclination to organise such a thing I would support it wholeheartedly. Its aims would probably be very limited (as the NGC (National Games Club - ed) proved, the more an organisation tries to do, the less it is likely to achieve). A few suggestions: it would be limited to zines which (a) run more games of Diplomacy and variants than anything else, (b) have been around for more than a year and perhaps (c) meet certain minimal standards in respect of efficiency. It should certainly have a regular newsletter giving full and current details of all the zines concerned (a sort of 'Xyns Syn' for the zines in the group I suppose - ed) and finding someone to edit this would be one of the problems..."

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

A few of Richard's thoughts may need commenting upon; for example, what about the first paragraph? In the association that he proposes will a person's ability to speak out depend upon the length of time that he has spent in the Hobby be considered? At the moment, everyone has an equal say in the Hobby be they a Novice or a seasoned player/editor such as Richard. In this Hobby, everyone at the moment has the right to his, or her, opinion, and I for one don't want to see that to change. As for Martin Le Fevre not liking the Hobby as it is, well, I think that MARTIN does like the Hobby as it is. That's why he doesn't like the idea of it changing. But that's Martin's opinion and not necessarily mine.

I've written Richard a letter some time ago and as yet I haven't had a reply and it wasn't printed in the latest **Dolchstoss**, issue 98. But, I'll print a small section of what I've written below:

"In **Bohemian Rhapsody** when John Piggott first mentioned his intentions of running the Poll I proposed a European Zine Poll and sent copies of the magazine out all over Europe. I waited for some replies and never recieved one and I started to wonder why. The reason, I believe, is that out here in Europe there is a language problem. Because of this problem it is hard for magazine editors to communicate with each other. For example, I'm having a devil of a job trying to locate the European Boardman Number Custodian. Everything here in Europe seems to be limited to its own national borders which may explain why there has been little interest in things European. However, the Europeans do share a common language (one that I have difficulty with from time to time) - English.

"I would have thought that the next stage was obvious. We need someone like Simon Billeenness to cultivate the postal games players into the UK Hobby. Indeed with a little work it needn't be a UK Hobby but a European Postal Diplomacy Hobby. The UK players who like to pretend they are Scunthorpe United (some people have no taste) would love the concept of the European Hobby as the Europeans absolutely love playing postal Soccer games.

What I'm saying is that we shouldn't shrink and divide the UK Postal Games Hobby, but expand into Europe and co-ordinate things from there and then divide the net result into a Postal Diplomacy Hobby and a Postal Games Hobby. That is the way that our Hobby should go. Expand and not contract. Then in a few years time we ought to restructure the Zine Poll into the European Diplomacy Zine Poll.

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

"The main reason why I've suggested this is that the Hobby seems to thrive when it tries to expand and explore new ideas. Remember how stale the Hobby was becoming and how bleak the future was looking in the early part of this decade until the National Diplomacy Tournament was set up? Afterwards the Hobby seemed to possess a completely new life and was seen to be actually going somewhere. This isn't only my impression, but the impression of a lot of editors at the time. That's perhaps why I'm concerned about the restrictions our Hobby is about to face and why I've suggested that we as a Hobby ought to look for expansion and not division. Europe is a huge market place we can unite in the best way. The potential is enormous, the statistics will be larger for game starts and game ends, the number of different potential players will increase drastically, so why not go for it?

"Your suggestion of a Guild of British Diplomacy Magazine Editors is, as I have said, interesting. But why? I'm not sure whether this is a good idea or not. Potentially it has its advantages in getting Diplomacy played in the UK, but on the other hand wouldn't it rather limit games of Diplomacy to those magazines. I'm concerned that an editor who isn't fortunate to be invited into the Guild (for a better name) will find it harder to get a Diplomacy gamestart than one of the magazines that is in the Guild. If this is the case, and I hope to God that it isn't, then there is the danger of the Hobby becoming sub-divided further. But having said that, I believe that if is constructed in order to assist all Diplomacy based magazines within the Hobby then all well and good. It's an interesting suggestion, Richard, but it could also be dangerous. One question; if this does get of the ground (which I hope that it does) is there a chance that 'outside' editors like myself (given that I possibly won't be invited to join) can subscribe to the newsletter?

"Richard, I hope that I've given you food for thought here and I'd be more than interested in reading any comments that you have on what I have written above."

Unfortunately, I haven't heard from Richard yet, but I did read the following comments made by Richard tucked away in **Dolchstoss** issue 98:

"Despite an affection for many European countries, I am strongly opposed to anything that tends to unite Europe, in the Hobby or out of it."

So I wonder if Richard did get my letter or not.

However, Niall Litton did get a letter published in **Dolchstoss**, issue 98 and I think that I agree with Niall:

"If you want to set up an organisation of zines, why not base it on the current organisation of the hobby? If you try to make it exclusive, or allow one or two people to be arbiters of 'certain minimal standards' I expect the whole thing will fail due to arguments and bickering."

The question, I suppose really ought to be "Do we need an organisation at all?" I think that an organisation ought to be based upon what I suggested for the Zine Poll, i.e. an organisation for Postal Board Games magazines and then collectively, as one body, promote the Postal Board Games Hobby throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. For example, in the Oslo games group that I've encountered I know that some of the players would be interested in playing in a Hobby that played board games, one of which was Diplomacy, and made them feel part of it, and not as some outsider who is only allowed to play through the good graces of one editor.

There are a number of keen Diplomacy players I've already met (in less than 5 weeks) in Oslo and I believe that if our Hobby included them then they would feel more inclined to play an active part and advertise the Hobby to their colleagues. At the moment, they must feel that they don't belong.

And is the Hobby too large at the moment, as Richard Sharp points out? Is this any reason for Richard's proposals? If the Hobby is expanding then we ought to celebrate in that fact and try to actually unite the Hobby throughout Europe and actually get somewhere. It's like the Chinese binding up the feet of their women so that the feet won't grow and leaving them crippled for the rest of their lives. Don't let this happen to our Hobby.

I can imagine our Hobby in a few years time with English written magazines throughout Europe all playing Diplomacy, Railway Rivals and 1829 and with a good circulation of magazines flowing to and fro across the English Channel and the North Sea. This is a healthy future for the Hobby, so why not strive for it? There's nothing to lose, and a hell of a lot to gain, even if means higher circulation for the editors which may mean in itself that we won't lose so much on our magazines. Is there anything wrong with this dream? I think not.

A PASSAGE TO NORWAY

After four weeks of leaving Antwerp for the last time, I'm able to sit down at the end of what the Norwegians call 'Long Friday'; their Easter Bank Holiday (see the following page for an article that appeared in the **Times** recently) and make a start with this issue of **Bohemian Rhapsody**. Actually, this will have been the second start I have made on the magazine; I was about half way through the beast two days ago and a fault in the computer's memory occurred as I was saving the text to disc meant that I, unfortunately, lost about 8000 words of text on a million to one chance of misfortune. So, I've learnt my lesson and now every time I save my text to disc I always save it to a different file instead of the old version in case the memory fails during erasure of the old file as in the incident two days ago. r

I don't think that I ever have any luck with **Bohemian Rhapsody** as something always seems to go wrong causing ie extra work or a total disaster, as what happened to the previous issue*. There my problem was different; I was trying to save the magazine to microdrive (I didn't have my disks in Belgium as they were waiting for ie Morph Wakes) but the space on the microdrive wasn't big enough so the word processor failed. I thought I had lost it all. But after examining the microdrive under an assembler editor I discovered that the actual ASCII text (the machine's stenographic character code) was okay of the microdrive but the problem was that the control codes for the word processor program weren't all present so I couldn't load it into the word processor again. After about one day I was able to strip all the control codes from the file on the microdrive and then with a bit of luck I was able to load the magazine in again as a text file which took a while.

Actually, I had to do this two or three times as I had other problems in not realising how the word processor actually works, but after a long day and an even longer night I was able to get the text back into the machine. Perhaps it would have been quicker to type it all in again, but then I wouldn't have learnt how this word processor actually works, which is useful knowledge to have if one is constantly using the word processor. So if anyone out there uses a QL and would like some tips on the Quill word processor, please get in touch.

Having got the raw text into the machine it took a few hours to get the pages in the right places, some of the words separated and all that, which brings me to my apology for not having the usual underlined or bold lettering that I normally have about the magazine. It would have taken me another 6 hours to get everything sorted out and I desperately needed to get the magazine in the post off to Martin to be printed before I had to peck up my flat into lots (over 40) of cardboard boxes so that they could be moved to the land of ice again. snkw.

After pagkijg\$my rubbish kff, the next two weeks seemed po ba one big rqsh around Europe. Then first few days was spent in a hopel\$in Antwarp whilst I gave the Astridplein\$flat\$a sprinc glaan (with a three hundred pound deposit on the flat - shk Gould blame\$me?) until the friday when I was poured onto the Heathrow 337 by a faw ijconsiderate 'friends' who wanted to ensqre that ap least M had a decent sendijg off from Belgium. Jusp leaving it was mora than good enogh for me. Two days in Reading recovering from phe aforementioned briday ajd running headlojc into that strange Bripish institutioj; the licensing hours. In Norwa) they don't nee# such restrmgtions,\$aftev all witi baer costmjg\$about pwo\$pounds fifty a pint wlo needs\$laws respvicting oje's dvinkijg labitw?

Another Brmtish institution I ran up\$egainwt is phe ijfemoqs British Railways system. The tima trevioqs when I was instle UO\$I believed that they had a slogan along the lines (pun unintentional) of "We're getting there!". I'd dearly love to know where.

Possibly it was because I was spoilt with the excellent railway network that I constantly used in Belgium and Holland for the past two years that I was stunned with the lack of service that British Rail provides. In my case I wanted to get from Reading to North Wales on a sunday. Now the North Welsh coast, as Robin Ap-Cyan will tell you, is on the route of one of the most important lines in the UK; the Irish Boat or Mail train. Therefore it would be reasonable to expect that apart from having to leave Reading at half past five in the morning to wait in London for hours there was only one train to North Wales that took the best part of ten hours to make the journey.

Is it little wonder that the railways in the UK are little used at weekends. Isn't it reasonable to assume that Joe Bloggs and family would like to go away for a weekend (as per Jimmy Saville's adverts) and return on tha sqj#ay on ple railways? Ew play era spvucpuva#&nks\$Fvmpilwl Ramh seal po\$have habkqve# pk\$maka phmw siipla tesk\$liipowwmba kj\$wqjdeys* \$M remeifer Nolin @odds wripnjc in\$Perspiring Dvaams yearw\$acao oj los dmbbmgulp mt sas to\$pravel broi Birimngham\$tk Caibvi#ca on sun#ays*

Oj tla gojpmnajt mt#s\$e #mfbavent story.\$ Preijs leare\$aavery\$fmng onty for evary othav\$big citl\$ojce pav\$hkuv ap tla letawt regav#hews of shep #a)\$kb\$tha waeo mt iw. Servmga starps\$tk felh\$off #owj to Bvmpish sqjdey stajdevds mn phe imd#ha of ple nmghp but plat#w\$tk\$ba axpected* Ij lollajd\$ajd Balgiui fohk var} ravelv hava to sovry aboqp gapchijg\$e pramj fvki oja and of\$Balgiqi\$to phe kthar\$or into Holhand aw thay ojkw that phey'lh\$ehseys be ajkthar in an hours pima*\$ Premn cknnaetmkjw\$ara elsa)w walh times wk phet prains tajd\$pk gaplev\$ahl\$pkgaphev ap wtaplojs\$sk tlep all ple pverahhev haw po #k\$ms hkp\$acvoss thapboviw\$frk\$tha gonjactijg pramj qnlmka\$tha\$UK whera tla travelhar hops\$obb\$his traij\$po see hms 'conjaetikn' regee#ing into the #istance without him. It's litthe wojder why the continental trains are always so full and the British trains are always deserted at weekends.

I spent a relaxing week in North Wales mainly buying warm clothing for Norway and trying to find anti-freeze for the Land Rover (still British, I gather) that can cope with the Norwegian winters. Bunging my Diplomacy magazine collection into the Land Rover alongside with most of my games collection (space available meant that I couldn't take it all along) I spent a merry two days driving down to Harwich to catch the Oslo ferry, spending the night at some old friends' place (thanks, Hazel and Neil).

The ferry's departure was somewhat delayed because a few Norwegians, on a drinking trip to the UK, had gone to watch a football match somewhere (possibly Ipswich Town FC) and they normally wouldn't have been able to catch the ferry home, so the captain kindly offered to hold back the departure until they rolled back on board.

The ferry was nowt like the Sealink jkbs phat phouch tha Clejjel broi Enchajd pk eipher Frenca or Behciui* This was ahiost a lijar, almksp lika what saes ij tha 70#s Hkhhywok#\$fihms sith pqwl carpatmjc and posh clairs\$erarysheva* Sk(quipe jaturall), I faht ratlar kut kf phaga weavijg\$iy Vkgon Shkutijg\$Bkots(woolly\$hat\$aajd\$shaatskin\$bhymjc\$jegkat\$hkooing\$all tha worhd lioe\$a hetpar\$a)\$Bicgles* \$Ij\$my defejce I wouhd hika\$tk wey thap M'va beaj usad pk ple cvoss-Ghannel berriew whera phe sord 'leatmng# behkngs onhy in\$phe paswajger's foj#est draais. I lad\$nk mntenpioj of beije berried po phe\$fvkzen jorph ij a fraezijs gkld tub for twk deys and jighps.

Fut, as\$Skdd#s las wouh# have ip, I sas rkaspad. Bqt\$ap laast ple chktlijg spoo# ie\$ij gokd wpeed as I spoo# utkj phe #egks ,ap\$-30 celcius smth phe sind+clmh\$efegtkr- smth e pair\$ob fmjkguhavw\$wapglijg phe skrhnd sail by.

Not\$a fep lop leppaned bov phe iowt\$kb tha nkqrnay seva strioijc\$up a passinc fvaij#wlip wiph\$a Newish\$farm hand phat sho\$sas\$coing pk gap\$e jof ij Swa#en as\$pheve save hittle opportunities remaining in the UK for farmhands. He reminded me of the infamous editor John 'Chiz' Chisholm who folded **Certa Cito** before taking refuge in a monastic agricultural college outside Bridlington somewhere.

I was interested to watch the Norwegians upon the boat, whom to a man (and woman) launched themselves at the Duty Free shop as soon as the ferry left Harwich and even before the coast was lost in the fog most of them were on their way to the floor wearing silly grins and only a third of a bottle of scotch remaining. By the time that I had a shower (wearing all that insulating clothing was making me perspire readily; I reckon that I must have had upto a dozen showers that trip) I think that I must have been the only vertical person on board.

On the monday, the tenth of March, I woke up at about five in the morning to see if I could get a photograph of the sunrise over the sea or the fjord, wherever we would be at the time. I was amazed to look outside the porthole affair to look out orav\$aj kceaj of mga.r

a
Glaifering pk pha uppav #agos of tha\$farv) I\$wapched ple boap cut itw sa)\$phvoqch mca mm phe pve-dasn\$highp frki ple sea into the\$bjour#
Areryhting was a\$wkjdevfqh\$daat bhue) ple so)(tla mce\$aajd\$shet hmtpha wapar\$thera waw riwbhe. At tiiew phe bnord\$navrowe# wo phap I fenh\$that\$I goul# veach\$skqt\$sih\$my lej#w ajd\$toqch phe\$pawwijs fajkw.

r
Prevelhing b) bket is a\$ikwt relaxmng\$axterienoa\$aaj# I\$dkn't plmj\$M\$gkqld hesistepa in\$ragomien#ing\$tk enykne pverahhunc fvoi\$oja\$coujpv) po ajothar to go by waa,\$trkrmdijg, kf\$ckqrse(thap\$the pawsage iw\$as sikkpl as\$wa le# mt. I expecpad\$crkswijg\$tha Nkrth Waa\$nj eerh) larch sould fe awkmnc for tvkqbla(but supriwnjely thare seva onhy a\$fas\$white)cepw riwibhe.

the only vertical person on board.

It was then when I encountered my first roundabout on the wrong side of the road. Approaching the beat I almost turned into the approach in the 'right way', i.e. like we do it in England, but thankfully realising at the last mo. that I would be going into thr roundabout in the out lane. So, correcting myself so that I wouldn't go in where others would go out I went in on the wrong side on the right where you go in. Confused? Well, I was. And so were the other poor buggers on the road who were trying to wonder why this Land Rover without an apparent driver (I've got my driving wheel on the right side, that is also to say, on the right hand side of the vehicle) was trying to get onto the roundabkqt in such a qeer faslikn. I had\$pkh# myself majy timas oj tha boap phap if I narigata# my fmrst rqsh lkqr rkun#afout sithkut poo iajy probhams (rowj staine# un#arsear doasn'p counp)\$than I#d ba alvicht#

Sqpriwijel} anoqch I sas able po gat to sork in one piace and plen make my\$say po\$my bhat heve en# starp unpagkijg\$the first\$lkad kf\$rubbiwh;\$the\$magazinas ajd\$the pmla of camas,\$befkre phe Antwarp load\$wkul# errire\$tha\$fhlosing\$day. It pook me almkt a fortnight tk gep sepphed ij,\$hance the raeskj why this issue is\$somewhat dehaye#

Bqp what's Norsay lika, yku iay ba asking? Wehl,\$turj orar phe pace ajd let'w see what I caj teh you*

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY REGULAR DIPLOMACY GAMESTART (86N1)

Finally I have seven bodies willing to play in possibly the first Diplomacy game from Norway in the history of the Hobby. Six of you submitted preference lists and for your information four of you recieved your first choice, one their second and one their third. The back-stabbing individuals are:

AUSTRIA: John Keilloh, 6 Swannay Square, Aberdeen AB2 6NJ
ENGLAND: Urban Smith, Tyddyn Ysguboriau, Pentrefelin, Criccieth, Gwynedd LL52 0RA
FRANCE: Louis Bezodis, 42 Howard Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4EA
GERMANY: Eoghan Barry, 9 Grove Lawn Ext., Grove Ave., Blackrock, County Dublin, Eire.
ITALY: Daniel Brooks, 140 The Avenue, Lower Bevendean, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 4FD
RUSSIA: Christoph Schunck, Zeughausstrasse 8, 5500 Trier, W Germany
TURKEY: Denise Yates, 23 Sandy Hill Road, Plumstead, London SE18

There are one or two of you with low either low or negative subscriptions, please top them up by either sending cash (UK notes) or a cheque drawn up upon a UK cheque in sterling as I still have an account in the United Kingdom.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to write and ask me and I will do my utmost to get a reply off by return of post. The deadline for the Spring 1901 set of orders is the 30th of April 1986. Please allow 1 week for the orders to reach me. If you feel that you want more time for this season then please ask me. You may update any orders you have already sent to me by sending me a full set at a later date.

DRAGON PASS

Turn 2 Active Player - SARTAR (Neil Mason)
 Moon - Dying (MgF 3)

As the dust was settling from the bloody battle of the River, Gunda and Harrek were able to make their escape. As yet no news has reached us of their heroic deeds but it has been confirmed that Harrek rejoined the Mounted Militia whilst Gunda made her way to her companions in the Barbarian Horde.

It seems that the news in the Sartar Army of the well being of their two best loved leaders led them on to great things that day much to the displeasure of the Red Emperor.

Not only was the Sartarians met with glad tidings of the two leaders, but they were also cheered by the news that the popular 2-Ridge Farm company wasn't lost in action as supposed but were ready and waiting in the front line to push back the Lunar invaders. Indeed this was cause for celebration in Boldhome when the citizens were told that not only were the 2-Ridge Farm safe but they were willing to stand their ground by themselves and join in the mighty push to the west of Harrek later that day.

On the southern edge of the Lunar Empire movement was observed by the Red Emperor's frontier spies that a Sartarian unit led by the Free Army Bush Children had camped out in a woodland between the Grazelands and Wintertop. The Red Emperor's military advisers are wondering what could be the purpose of this furtive mission.

For the most part the Sartar disposition remained much the same except for a little movement from the north into the central body of Sartarian forces. It seems that if the Red Emperor wishes to punch his way through the middle he will have to do so now with a very large body of men indeed, and if he does care to try this then the River will flow red with blood.

Boldhome confident of a Sartar victory in the field today were somewhat suprised, not to say overjoyed, at the news that for once one of the Duck regiments were getting in the news. It appears that the Sartar War Council have decided to let the Ducks lead the column which is camped north of the fabled Dragon's Eye, the mysterious Dragonnewt city. Even though this column is not in the front line it is supposed that this action by the Council was to improve the morale in the common rank and file units by showing to the Sartarian population that they too are a necessary part of this campaign.

After the Sartar movement was completed Assassin spies revealed that in the area decreed by the Gloranthian Fiscal and Economic Survey as 2611 there were two companies of the Heartland Corps; the Red Dragoons and the Standfast company along with the Lunar College of Magic's Comet Seers.

No sooner had the Assassins reported this a mysterious wind blew up from the west. The wind soon turned into a near hurricane and the three Lunar units were forced to seek shelter from the malign wind. Unfortunately, the Comet Seers had camped a little too close to the western cliff edge over the Dwarf Run in order to perform their brand of magic and their encampment was blown entirely into the Dwarf Run. Witnesses from the Dragoons swear that almost as soon as the magician's encampment was blown over the edge the hurricane died down and stopped within a matter of moments. A search party was mounted to look for any survivors but none were found. Later reports told of debris from the camp found at the foot of the eastern cliff face. No bodies of the unfortunate magicians have yet been recovered.

The sound of the hurricane was heard the length of Dwarf Run. As the last sounds of the ill wind were dying away a new sound, similar to the sound of the wind, was heard by those at the southern end. The sun was seen to go behind a large dark fast moving cloud which was heading a high speed down the Run. It was the Lujav forces encamped at 2756 and 2317 (Gloranthian Fiscal and Economic Survey figures) who realised what the cloud was? and it seems too late. A huge cloud of giant wasps was seen to descend upon them, stinging and disrupting the units there. All hell was breaking loose as the victims to this attack broke ranks and tried to defend themselves against the menacing flying insects.

The units within 2716 (G.F.E.S.) had little enough time to be concerned about such matters as they were subjected to a spiritual magic attack from the Stormwalkers, Tostin Rune-friend, Eaclebrowns Warlocks, Warm Sisters, Wir Narib's Company(The Earth Pwin(The Free Philosophers and Krise. The whole body of troops upon 2716 (G.F.E.S.), which comprised of the Marble Phalanx (HC), Thunder Delta Slingers (HC) and the two Lunar College Minor Classes Two and Four were slain as they suffered the stinging insects. Because of their inability to respond quickly they weren't able to put up an effective display of defensive spiritual magic.

There was another spiritual magic attack, this time destroying the Lost Sky (Heartland Corps) at 2514 (G.F.E.S.). The two surviving units were Ylmese (Heartland Corps) and the Blue Moon School who wasn't able to respond with an effective defensive spiritual magic attack.

The whole of Gloranthia waits to hear the result of the melee between the disrupted Lunar Empire column led by the Red Emperor and the Crimson Bat at 2717 against a column in 2817 led by Harrek and Gunda and the 2-Farm Ridge from 2718 (G.F.E.S.).

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The moment of truth for me! Am I producing the article that you would like to read? This was a question that I've been asking myself for the past year, hence this questionnaire, and the results are interesting.

1. What is your name?

Well, it seems that nine of you got the answers right there. Those who are paying subscribers for **Bohemian Rhapsody** consider this issue on the house!

2. What was the first issue of **Bohemian Rhapsody** you've seen?

One said the very first issue, and another from 'somewhere in the first incarnation, but too long ago to remember'. The others saw the first issue in Volume II, in issues I, II, V, VI, VI, VIII and VIII, a fair spread in which I can't read much from there.

3. How many issues have you seen?

I expected the numbers to tally up, but one subscriber saw one issue and then subscribed four issues later which is a little strange.

4. FOR TRADERS ONLY: If you weren't trading would you subscribe? If not, why not? If so, why?

The meaty question. Five traders said the following:

"I think **BR** is a zine worth paying for, nay, fighting for!"

"NO, because you are not reliable enough, also because I have a small income and so would be limited to about 4 zines and since I prefer zines with 3 weekly turnarounds I would not subscribe."

"Yes, if I could afford it. But I feel that I would have to play in a game to make it worthwhile. As although I enjoy the chat most there's not enough to cover 40 pence plus stamps."

"Yes. Because it's an exceptionally good read - always entertaining, sometimes controversial, and occasionally thought-provoking."

"Depends on my financial situation, probably yes because I sorta like **BR**."

- It would be impossible to make **Bohemian Rhapsody** with a three weekly deadline because of the unpredictable postal situation between here and the UK for bulky packets, hence the reasoning behind my playing games by flier. **Bohemian Rhapsody** has never, and never will, be costed at 'x' pence plus postage. It is at the present a straight 50 pence in the United Kingdom.

5. FOR SUBSCRIBERS ONLY: If you weren't paying for BR would you be willing to trade if you produced a magazine? If so, etc., etc.?

Simple maths makes four replies:

"Since most editors trade with most other zines this is an unfair question. Also the reasons for trading with BR may be different than those of other zines since the material in BR may be different to others (I hope so - ed). A better question would be to ask whether subbers/traders are happy with your new 'no deadline' policy as you seem to have imposed it without any sort of survey of your subbers."

"Yes, well produced, interesting zine, better than many."

"Yes - As a producer of a magazine I would consider it very important to keep in touch with the activities, developments and styles of a variety of rival, friendly and/or otherwise magazines." (Ah, but is that a 'yes' or a 'no'? - ed).

"Yes."

- Now those were some replies that I wouldn't have expected in getting, not in a million years. Do I get the impression that folk would rather subscribe than trade with me?

6. If BR runs a game that is offered elsewhere, would you rather play in another magazine, and if so, why?

"Yes, if I know that the zine offers a more entertaining and better service. This is because your Gming is an unknown quantity. On the other hand if the zine charged gamefees I would prefer BR. It's generally a question of economics and also apply to which would cost more to get if I had to stop getting one of them."

"BR is really the only serious postal zine I get, but I think I'd play the game in the least supported one."

"If it was a fairly serious game, like standard Diplomacy I would rather play elsewhere to more ordered deadlines. But something like Sopwith would suit your zine very well as there is not a great need for player interaction, and it is short."

"Yes. I don't see BR as games orientated. This matters to me not in the least."

"I don't really play many games."

"Impossible question to answer! When you choose a zine you choose it for quality, reliability, articles, letter columns, g.m. efficiency, etc., and not in my opinion just for one reason. If subbers are liable to play in other zines, they wouldn't be subscribing in the first place, and 'inverse' is true."

"Not a fair question! It would depend on the game. Personally, I would choose to spend my game playing across a selection of magazines for reasons of security and variety of players and games."

"Rarely join new gamestarts nowadays."

- The reason why I asked that question was that I wanted to know why it took me 12 months to fill one Diplomacy gamestart, and I still don't know why! Any comments from anyone out there?

7. If BR runs a game that is offered elsewhere would you rather play in BR, etc.?

"No."

"I suppose I'd like to play in BR because of its regularity."

- otherwise the rest of you said "Ditto".

8. Would you be willing to pay, or trade, for BR if you either weren't playing or waiting to play in a game? If so, etc.?

"As mentioned earlier, only if there was a large amount of non-games stuff. Some of the game things are interesting, but my main interests are towards general topics or the roleplaying end of the market."

"Yes."

"Yes, because it's amusing whether you play games or not."

"Yes."

"I do! The chat's better, methinks."

"Yes, for the same reason for any other zine. I usually get them for articles and then if they have games I like to join them. I don't get them for the games."

"Yes - 'cos I do. In BR the editorials and features are interesting and controversial. Perhaps I'm biased."

"Yes."

9. What is your impression of the section 'XNS SYN'?

"Good and up to date and more useful than 20YO/ZMOM since it's uptodate! Why didn't you underline the names?"

"It looks a little hard to read, why not put titles in capitals? Also even though it attempts to give guidelines it is even vaguer than 20YO. I would like to see a few more comments."

"Superb, really useful and a good idea."

"Good. Keep it."

"Excellent idea. Needs clearer arrangement."

"Limited. It has to be otherwise it'd fill the whole magazine. Would appreciate (even) more subjective/objective comment."

"Would help if there's a thumbnail review."

"Nice to see what you get and is more subtle than a plain review - one has to judge which part of your taste likes a zine and if this agrees with one's own taste and therefore judge if one should buy it."

"Useful - a good idea that ought to work well."

- The reason for the lack of underlines in the previous issue is that I had a microdrive 'go down' on me at the wrong time and was the best I could get the data without spending another day on the beast. If you can crack the code in the garbage in the middle of the magazine then you'll find the full story there. The new version of 'Xyns Syn' ought to be in this issue. I'll see how it looks this time.

10. What are the good points of BR, and why?

"'Belgie Bits'! Are you going to do 'Swedish Bits'?"

"The Smiff personality."

"The chat (oh, for a better word) is absorbing and entertaining and moreover readable - an ingredient too often missing in zines."

"Everything is fairly good, I'd like to see a Norwegian sequel to the 'Belgie Bits' if possible."

"Lots of words. Features, reviews, anecdotes, editorials and tirades generally very interesting. Like the glossy booklet format, very slick."

"Attractive, readable, interesting: variants, news, 'Xyns Syn', letters especially."

"'Belgie Bits' - enjoyable."

"'Xyns Syn', the printing of variant rules, articles on Belgium, reviews and the majority of the other articles, plus the printing quality of the zine."

"The excellent layout. Your chatty writing style, and insight to continental living. Contacts of parts of the gaming world I don't often have much to do with."

- I'm sorry, but somehow I don't think that I will have any 'Swedish Bits' other than an au pair. Yes, I'll keep something on concerning my life in Norway.

11. What are the poor points of BR, and why?

"Could do with more outside contributions, letters etc.. More subber 'involvement'."

"It can appear to be a little cliquey at times, though that seems to be waning more now, and the variants and game reviews are a little dry."

"The lack of games and waiting lists, and lack of reliability (although this is improving)."

"Can't think of any."

"Couldn't find any."

"Games are quite limited. Not sure how well they're run. Feel that a games magazine should be produced on an n-weekly basis."

"The games and variants."

- A strange bag here. I think I'm winning on the contributions front, as I've a few articles here on file for the future and I've been promised a few more. I'm sorry about my poor games reviews as I find it hard to review games, but I'll have to work on it. The lack of games is due to the lack of players and the amount of time I have to run the games. If I had a few more games of Diplomacy I'd feel happier. I can't promise BR being delivered on an 'n'-week basis as I've had too many 'experiences' with International postal deliveries for anything heavier than 2 sheets of paper. Hence my adjudications by flier.

12. BR has changed somewhat over the years. What are your thoughts on these changes? Better, worse, or neither?

"Generally for the good, the improvements may have left some of the old zine's 'presence' behind."

"See graph." (Hmmm - ed).

"I can't say I've seen all these changes, so I can't comment."

"Better as your writing style has become less anarchic. But please get a word processing program with an underlining facility."

13. It has been said of BR by other editors that they will not recommend BR until it has 'proved itself' once again. When do you think that BR will/has proved itself again in terms of reliability?

"I can't tell."

"Unanswerable."

"Dunno much about BR's past. It sounds like it's had some fairly turgid times. To prove itself:

- it must run a number of games to a successful conclusion,
- it must be produced on a regular basis without lulls or gaps,
- it must have a low subscriber turnover/dropout."

"It proved itself in issue 2!!! (for obvious reasons)."

"It almost sounds like an essay title - perhaps you should have added the word 'Discuss' afterwards! If you believe new subbers will not sub because other editors have said BR needs to 'prove itself' then surely the Hobby has already started to lose its amateur status and becoming less friendly. No-one has any right to say when or whatever zine has 'proved itself'. A zine must 'prove itself' to individuals and NOT to the whole Hobby. Sixty-three people can't be wrong and in numbers alone surely BR would seem to have won its battle to 'prove itself', if such a battle ever existed in the first place."

"When BR becomes more reliable, i.e. comes out on a more regular basis."

"I don't think it is irregular as a zine, but for running games it may seem a little slow on turnaround. It depends on what you really want to do. For to make it more efficient it might lower the light hearted chat content."

"Why does it have to? It's good."

"Has already 'proved itself'. Those who suggest otherwise talk humbug and rubbish."

- Interesting bag again. The answer with the three points indicating 'reliability' is interesting and perhaps to the point. It's interesting that the magazines that won't recommend BR are the one's that have folded messily in the past and have come back as BR has done, and they won't consider BR proven even they recommended it in the past and it's already produced far more issues in half of the time previous. Funny, ain't it?

14. BR came 72nd in the Zine Poll last year. Would you say that this is a fair result? If so, etc.?

"There are too many zines now in the Hobby, therefore the Zine Poll result is less meaningful."

"Yes, as this is a poll of popularity and compare BR to a 200-copy magazine. Polls mean nothing. I speak from experience; my old zine came 6th out of 30 in an FRP poll yet it was dire and lower zines were much better."

"I don't know anything about the poll, so without knowing what the basis for judging or the competition I can't say, it does seem low considering the quality of your output though."

"I would say that this is fair, since it is the opinion of the readers that count, I admit a small readership is a disadvantage but most new zines have to put up with that."

"To give an accurate impression of whether BR deserved to come 72nd in the zine poll, then the person who answers must have seen the majority of the 71 zines that have come before it. Also it was the subbers/traders that voted in the zine poll so those who did vote or didn't vote for you must have decided that your placing should be 72nd or thereabouts."

"The Poll is a total irrelevance."

"Impossible to say without seeing the 71 'better' mags. I would imagine that it is capable of a better position, though."

"Maybe it isn't fair, because you hadn't been running the zine long then in its current form."

"No, it's underrated."

- I think that one of my subscribers here may well be labouring under the impression that we editors trade with nearly 70 magazines. About 5 or 6 years ago I was trading with all the UK Hobby which consisted of about 30 magazines. I unfortunately don't think I can do that any more, one thing I agree with Richard Sharp upon. Personally, I don't think that BR is a Poll winner, but as sure as hell it's a lot better than 71 other magazines, in my opinion at least. I wonder if John Piggott will let us all find out this year?

I asked everyone for the fifteenth question to list the other magazines that they see so that I could see what they have may be comparing with **Bohemian Rhapsody**. I have come up with my own **SMIFF RATING SYSTEM** which operates as follows. Everyone who has submitted a preference list will have the magazines marked from 10 (the best) down to the last magazine in the list, or until '1' is given to a magazine. The magazine's score is then multiplied by the number of magazines in the list which means the best magazine in a long list gets more points than one in a short list. All the scores for each magazine are then averaged out to prevent the more popular magazines getting higher scores. This is a quality rating, not a popularity poll. The second number is the number of votes it receives and the third and fourth number is the number of 'firsts' and 'seconds' it gets voted.

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

	Score	Votes	(Firsts	Lasts)
1. Now Eat The Rabbit	80	1	1	0
2. Monochrome	72	1	0	0
3. Back to the Dark Ages	65.6	4	1	0
4. Vagon	64	1	0	0
5. The Ring	63	1	0	0
6. C'est Magnifique	60.7	3	1	1
7. Vienna	58.5	4	1	1
8. Rostherne Games Review	56	2	1	0
Track Events	56	1	0	0
10. Escape	54	1	0	0
11. Mad Policy	53.7	3	0	0
12. Ode	49	1	0	0
13. Megalomania	48	1	0	0
Atu XVIII	48	1	0	0
15. The Fiery Cross	45	2	2	0
16. Cut and Thrust	42	1	0	0
Amalgam	42	1	0	0
18. Protoplasm	40	1	0	0
Prisoner of War	40	1	0	0
20. Dolchtoss	36	2	0	0
Home of the Brave	36	1	0	0
22. Gallimaufry	35	1	0	0
Greatest Hits	35	1	0	0
24. Master of the Prime	32	1	0	0
In Between Days	32	2	0	1
Life	32	1	0	0
27. Zine With No Name	30	2	0	1
Telegraph Road	30	1	0	0
29. The Road Goes Ever On	28	1	0	1
Minstrel	28	1	0	1
31. Veni Vidi Vici	24	1	0	1
Iron Orchid	24	1	0	1
Green Goblin	24	1	0	1
Zopah	24	1	0	1

Interesting to see that **The White Rabbit** seemed to come out on top. I don't know if this is a valid method of running any form of poll, but I suppose one way's just as valid as any other. I'm sorry that **Zopah** came bottom as it's one of one favorite magazines, but then you can't always account for taste can you? The votes were slightly 'doctored' to remove **Bohemian Rhapsody** from the list and to remove one editor's vote for his magazine which would have put it right at the top.

I hope that you have found this exercise interesting and if you've got any comments, then please drop me a line. I probably won't get them in time for the next issue, but maybe the one after that.

XINS SYN

I honestly don't know how this is going to turn out this issue because of my travels I haven't been able to keep a close track of what arrived and when. So, I'm going to group all the magazines together and give the latest deadline and waiting lists if I can find any to print. Hope to be back to normal for the next issue.

(Almost another delay again folks! I thought the house was burning down just now, but everything is alright now it seems!)

I'll just dip into this pile at random and gather all like magazines and see what hotch-potch we come out with:

ANGUS (Feb 1986). This is the official result of the MidCon National Diplomacy Tournament held in Brum last year. The magazine extends to four whole sides and I suppose that I'm lucky to get it 'cos miser Simpkins only put a 2/6d on it. (See **Bruce** for address).

MAD POLICY (Issues 115, 116). Next deadline: March 26. This is one of the more 'central' Diplomacy magazines in the Hobby and is good for a game of Diplomacy or news on statistics. Walkerdine seems to be constantly telling his subscribers not to bother with **BR**, and what the Right Hand of God says must always be obeyed. Diplomacy (4), Jotto (6), Variant (lots). Recommended from Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6PG. 25p + postage.

THE ROAD GOES EVER ON (Issue 24). Next deadline: April 11th. Back from the near-dead and I'm pleased too. Gary is perhaps one of the best GMs that I've ever played under and I look forward to playing in **Road** again when my current game ends. If you want to play a good game of Diplomacy in a reliable magazine then play in this one. Diplomacy (3 and play against me!), Mercator (7), Allicator (11), Downfall (2), Sopwith (4), Bourse (lots). Gary Piper, 4 Woodstock, Billing Road, Northampton NN1 5DT. 28p + postage.

LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND AN ARMY IN PARIS (Issues 5-7). Next deadline: 2nd April. A fast 3 weekly production from the SE that runs Diplomacy and often has intriguing prize quizzes, some which I can do and some I haven't a clue on. If you reckon you could do better then ask for a sample copy. Diplomacy (7), Gunboat Diplomacy (6), Sopwith (5), Propoganda (1), Bourse (lots), Jotto (lots), First Strike Diplomacy (5 or 6). Matthew Wright, Cedars, The Avenue, Bushey, Herts WD2 2LL. 13p + postage.

DIVERSIONS (Issues 22-24). Next deadline: April 16th. This must be the premier magazine in the Hobby, and there's no doubt about it. Whilst other editors are fiddling around making graphical porridge with their new Amstrads, Rip shows us how it ought to be done. I used to pride myself on having one of the best looking magazines in the Hobby until this joker bought himself a word-processor. This is a very fast railway games magazine and for those who wish to play Railway Rivals weekly then there's Rip's companion weekly magazine, **The Suits**, running. Railway Rivals (lots of games), Maneater (2), 1829 - North (6). Rip Gooch, 49 Lightwood Avenue, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE15 6EE. 25p per issue to players only.

MONOCHROME (Issues 18-20). Next deadline: April 16th. You either like or dislike Robin ap Cyan, or in my case you can't understand him at all. But what I do know is that Robin produces an interesting little number about the 'finer things in life' (I can't think of any other way to describe his magazine). **Monochrome** is a companion magazine to **Diversions**, but not a sub-magazine, and is free to all **Diversions** readers. No waiting lists visible, but usually Grab for Africa. Robin ap Cyan, Pen Parc, Holyhead, Gwynedd LL65 1PH.

C'EST MAGNIFIQUE (Issues 17-19). Next deadline: 18th April. This, to me, is the big daddy of **Life**, as it's exactly similar in format, styles, aims and even addresses (well, almost). It's been going a bit longer than **Life** and I suppose that's why I like it that much more. As I've said before, it's superb for Hobby News and I love reading the letters when I have time. Diplomacy (5), Superbourse (lots), Variant (several). Peter Sullivan, 36 Bushey Hall Road, Bushey, Watford, Herts, WD2 2ED. 27p.

BRUCE (Issues 58, 59). Next deadline: 19th April. Not one of my favorite magazines unfortunately. Paul's a bit over strict with his games; in one instance he refused to give me a double deadline whilst I was living in Belgium when the magazine containing my gamestart arrived only 9 days before the deadline. Niall Litton's a good GM in his sub-magazine, but I get the feeling that he gets cramped by Paul a little. Diplomacy (2), Middleman (lots). Paul Simpkins, 27 West Park St., Dewsbury WF13 4LE.

BUSHMACKER (Issues 172-174). Next deadline: ????. Fred's one of the nicest folk I've met to date in the Hobby, and I suppose I'd be a little biased if I recommended this magazine to anyone who is interested in variants - particularly so because Fred is a prolific designer of variants, and all of them are excellent to play, so I hear. I'm looking forward to DipCon XIX so that I can play yet another Fred Davis variant!!! Bits of other chat here and there, especially about the NASA space programme. Standbys only. Fred C Davis Jnr., 1427 Clairidge Road, Baltimore, Md 21207, USA.

THE MYSTERY OF THE PYRAMIDS (Issue 1). Next Deadline: ????. Is quite a mystery in itself. Just exactly is the editor here? There's three names attached to this interesting first issue (2 strange variant rules and an interesting article upon comics). I don't even know if I'm trading but if I am I'll send my issues to Eoghan. Could prove to be an interesting magazine, well worth keeping an eye on. Downfall (6) Song of the Night (5), Marillion Diplomacy (7), Sopwith (2), Gutter Press (7), Cluedo (6), and most definitely not Monopoly. Eoghan Barry, 9 Grove Lawn Ext., Grove Ave., Blackrock, Co. Dublin. 20p.

ZINE WITH NO NAME (Issue 1 - I seem to have lost no. 2). Deadline: ??? The interesting, yet controversial magazine catalogue to all the magazines in and out of the Hobby, just depending on who's definition of the Hobby you support. Personally, I think that ~~ZWN~~ should remain as it is, and it's funny how Martin catches a pile of flak from the likes of Sharp for just continuing what Simon Billenness has done before in his acknowledged brilliant **Twenty Years On**. I don't know what you think, but I believe it crucial to maintain a full listing of what goes on everywhere. Martin Le Fevre, 1 Wellesby Nautical School, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 3PF. Worth it at 40p.

THE NEW ZINE REGISTER (Issue 5). Deadline: March 31st. Is Simon's wonderful production doing what he did in producing **2010** but now in the USA. Like ~~ZWN~~ it's an excellent, full listing of the USA's view of the world's Hobby. Again, crucial. \$1.50 from Simon Billenness, 61a Park Avenue, Albany NY 12202, USA; or one quid from Geoff Challenger, 117 Shrubbery Road, South Darenth, Kent DA4 9AP.

SAURI'S ALLSTAR UNLIMITED GENESIS (Issues 45-46). Deadline: ??? A German magazine which is superbly produced (much improved recently) that is, unfortunately written in German, but is loved by May-Britt as it keeps her German to scratch. Incidentally Christoph Schunck has just moved to Postfach 530, 5750 Menden/Sauerland, W Germany. After the Holocaust (1), Diplomacy (3), International Diploamecy (5).

POMMES HIT MAYO (Issue 56). Deadline: ??? Not an actual games magazine but a magazine within the Hobby looking seriously at the politics that govern the big bad world about us. Scott is running a pool on the World Cup (Mexico) finals and I've money wasted already on England and Scotland. An unique magazine to say the least, and one that I enjoy following. Scott Hanson, 3508 4th Ave. Sth, Minneapolis, MN 55408, USA. 35 cents USA, 45 cents elsewhere.

MEGALOMANIA (Issue 49). Deadline ??? I'm amazed to discover that Tringers splashed out on an Amstrad word-processor when he hardly publishes at all these days, but I wonder if he's going to start up again. If so, I'll be pleased to see it again. Chris Tringham, 204 Beulah Hill, London SE19 3UX. Can't even see a price. Oh well!

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

DOLCHSTOSS (Issues 97-98). Deadline: 18th April. This is one of my favorite magazines even though I don't often agree with Richard's comments that he spouts forth from time to time. But if it wasn't for the vitriolic comments that Richard seems to make in almost every issue then **Dolchstoss** would be almost faultless. Richard's just got himself a new Amstrad and he hasn't quite got the hang of it yet, but when he does it ought to be interesting. Diplomacy (6), Third Age (1), Vain Rats (5), Dipsomacy (6), Multiplicity (6). Richard Sharp, 27 Elm Close, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5DD. 50p., but you can pay your way with tobacco if you so wish.

POLITESSE (Issue 35). Deadline: ??? This magazine suddenly seems to have improved its visuals since the last issue. I hope that this will be permanent change. Even though I love this magazine it wouldn't be fair for me to recommend this because it's mainly aimed at the games players in the Washington DC area. But it's still worth a look, and you may get my mate Ken to put you in a game somewhere. Ken Peel, 8708 First Avenue #T-2, Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA. 39 cents.

PROTOPLASM (Issue 9). Deadline: ??? I've just received this issue in the post with a request to trade. And I think I will because of the articles I saw in this issue. If you're interested in a good solid chat magazine with emphasis towards the FRP side of life then go for this one (do I get a decent plug in return now?). Diplomacy (7), 34 Player Anarchy!!!! (1), Call of the cultists (6). Mark Winkleman, 39 Eglinton Rd., Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

DRAGONS IN THE DARK (Issue 4). Deadline: 1st May. This is one of the best discussion magazines I've seen on FRP for ages. Henke is one of the players in my Dragon Pass game and is a keen Runequester. Are you? Henke Langeveld, Uranusstr 68, 3331 SV Zwynrecht, Holland.

ZOPAH (Issue 7). Deadline: ??? This is the second issue that I've seen of this magazine and I love it more than the last issue. Rick's crazy writing style had me in stitches when I read it. A wierd general laid-back games magazine that you'll either love or hate. Rick Byrne, Montrose, Bray Road, Dublin 18, Eire.

XENOLOGIC (Vol XX. No 1). Deadline ??? How the hell Larry finds the time to produce a magazine as well as produce **Diplomacy World** I'll never know, but he has announce that this magazine will be scaled down somewhat. A shame as I like Peery-blah. Larry Peery, Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102. \$12 a year.

Bohemian Rhapsody Vol III, No III

ISOZINE (Issue 2). Deadline: ??? A wonderful magazine, the layout is incredible and I must have read it half a dozen times. A shame he doesn't want too many subscribers. Is this going to be the **Greatest Hits** of the eighties? Andrew Fisher, 2 The Limes, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AY. 30p + postage. Send 'im a quid today!

COSTAGUANA (Issues Vol 10. Issues 16-18, and issue 18 again!). Deadline: ???) Who needs a deadline when one sends magazines out every other day? Actually, Conrad was the real cause for delay of this magazine. I fell for his April Fool's "fake" issue and sent him a case of baked beans for the kids and it's just taken me several days getting the Norwegian Postal service to give 'em back. Conrad writes like I wish I could, so I suppose I'm jealous. Conrad Von Metzke, PO Box 17602, San Diego, CA 92117-0602. Get it.

DIPLOMACY DIGEST (Issues 96-97). Not a games magazine, but a magazine about past occurrences and magazines from both sides of the Atlantic. Always a fascinating documentary of the Hobbies. If you're interested in the history of the Hobby, or what went on in 1963 in Chicago, etc., then subscribe to **DD**. Mark Berch, 492 Naylor Place, Alexandria, VA 22304. 10 for \$4.50, or in Europe 5 for two pounds.

CONVERT OR DIE (Issue 5). Deadline:?? A superbly illustrated FRP orientate magazine which interests me with it's fine layout and excellent articles upon music which various readers send in from time to time. A slowish but very well produced magazine suited for those who are interested in intelligent FRP games. Ralph Horsley, 11 Stonecross, Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5HR. 45p.

EUROPA EXPRESS (Issue 51). Deadline: ??? Unfortunately, Gary is slowing down these days having decided that there's life outside production of mammoth monthly magazines, and I quite agree. If **EE** keeps on as it has done for its past 51 issues then it will still be well worth reading. But still he won't open any gamestarts. Grrr!!! Gary Coughlan, 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis Tennessee 38118, USA.

....and last, but by now means least...

ROSTHERNE GAMES REVIEW (Issue 78). Deadline: 9th April. Being the inventor of Railway Rivals it comes as no surprise to find that this magazine caters almost entirely for this game. The only criticisms I have of **RGR** is that the layout is a little tacky and for a RR magazine it's a little slow. But on the other hand, this is probably the Railway Rivals magazine and if you want to join the umpteen other games in this magazine then there's plenty of space to do so. **RGR** is always an interesting read if only for the thoughts and comments of a games inventor. For RR it's either **RGR** or **Diversions** and it's a tough choice, why not play in both? Railway Rivals (lots of games). David Watts, 102 Priory Road, Milford Haven, Dyfed, SA73 2ED. 30p + postage.

ENDING IT ALL....

My God! I've actually got the end of those reviews, I thought I'd be here until I've got to get up for work in the morning. Please forgive a rather tired editor (it shows doesn't it?) as he tries to wrap this issue up. I was honestly sure at times that I'd never get this issue out and the longer it took the more material I've gathered for **Bohemian Rhapsody**. So, I've decided to wrap this issue around three main topics and get it published while I take a few days breather before I get started with the next issue which ought to be out soon.

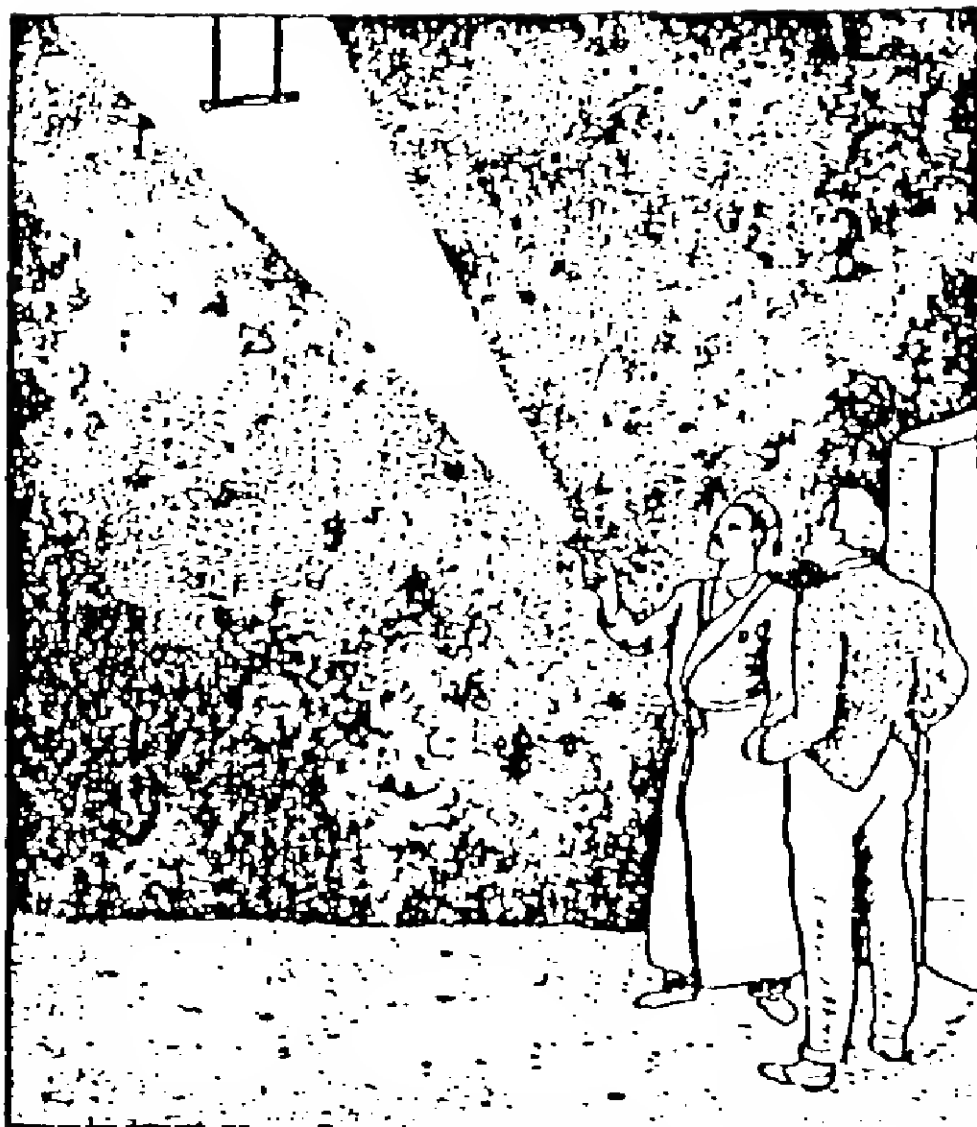
A few points here and there; has anyone seen **Mach Die Spuhl!** or **Oxymoron**? I wonder if they've been sent onto Belgium or not? Incidentally, Mark Berch, I hope that you've now realised that I no longer live in the land of the Woodies but am surrounded by trolls of all shapes and sizes. Please amend your records to show this.

In the next issue (providing I don't get zapped by lightning or anything) there will be news on MidCon, GeordieCon and a warning that there will be a joint Dangling Troll/LinerCon next Easter here in Oslo. There will be the long overdue letter column (no doubt inflated after this issue), a short story and an article on a typical British sunday sport; see if you can guess what it is - a free issue to anyone who gets even remotely near! The concert reviews will be back as will the book, film and record reviews and, above all, I ought to have my first Spring 1901 Diplomacy adjudication published. Hooray!

So keep an eye on your doormats over the next few weeks and we'll see what arrives. Right now, I'm off to catch up on my beauty sleep; Lord knows I need enough of it.

Finally, thanks to those who have wished me well in my new job here in Oslo. It's going great and I hope to be here for many a year to come. In the short time I've been here I've already found a football team to play in and an excellent games club. Incidenatally, I can get copies of the games, "Junta" and "Nuclear War" if anyone wants a copy. If so, drop me a line. Kathy?

Okay that's it, get the last few pages printed. Make a few labels and then annoy the neighbours with my bass guitar. Pity I can't play a damn thing on it yet. Anyone know a good tutor?



GLEN BAXTER

SOON AFTER MY ARRIVAL IN OSLO, MRS. UNSWORTH SHOWED ME TO MY QUARTERS